OUTLAWS OF THE WEST

12¢

MARCH

OUTLAWS of the WEST

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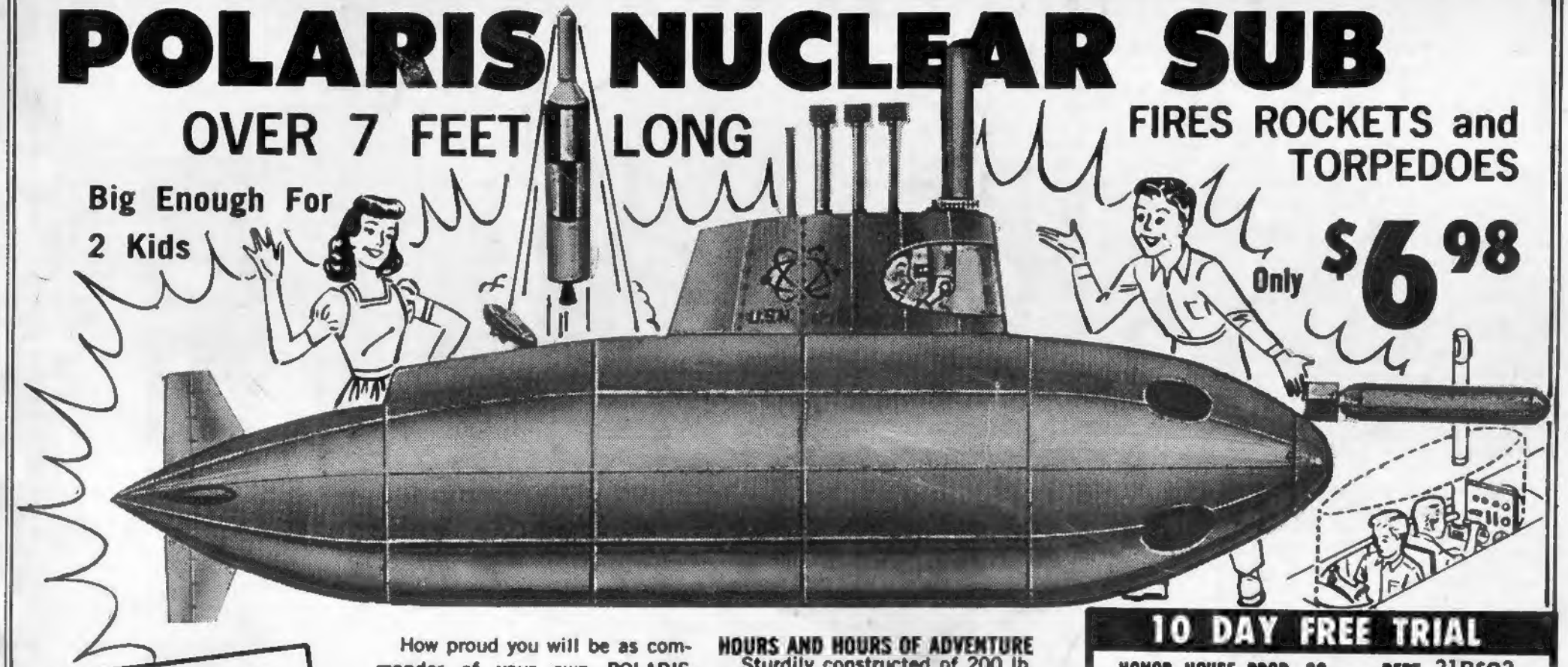

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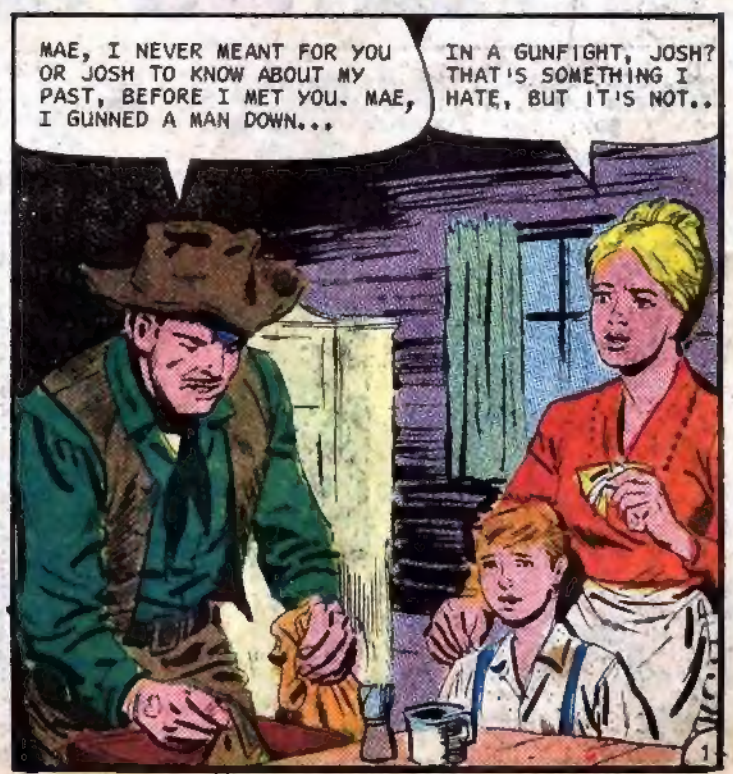
THERE WAS NO SECOND CHANCE FOR THE ARIZONA KID. HE COULDN'T CHANGE WHAT HE WAS, BECAUSE A KILLER CAN'T UNKILL, AND MEN LIKE ARIZONA WERE...

BORN BAD


MAE, I NEVER MEANT FOR YOU OR JOSH TO KNOW ABOUT MY PAST, BEFORE I MET YOU. MAE, I GUNNED A MAN DOWN...
IN A GUNFIGHT, JOSH? THAT'S SOMETHING I HATE, BUT IT'S NOT..

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nomscans

YOU'RE...YOU'RE RUNNIN' OUT, PA? YOU'RE GOIN' TO LEAVE ME AND MA? B-BUT, WHY?

IF I TAKE TIME TO EXPLAIN, IT'LL BE TOO LATE. I THOUGHT I'D LOST MY PAST ...I...I'VE GOT TO HURRY...

JOSH...YOU CAN'T! NOTHING CAN BE THAT BAD..!

MAE...THEY'LL BE HERE. THEY'LL TELL YOU. JUST REMEMBER, I LOVE YOU BOTH!

MA, AIN'T WE EVER GOIN' TO SEE PA, AGAIN?

OF COURSE WE WILL, FRANKIE! HE'LL BE BACK...

BUT JOSH HYATT'S WIFE AND SON FELT DEEP INSIDE THAT HE WAS GONE FOR GOOD...TWENTY MINUTES LATER, WHEN SHERIFF TOM DONEGAN ARRIVED, THEY LEARNED WHY HE WAS GONE...

WE WANT HIM FOR MURDER, MISS MAE. FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IT HAPPENED...

PA'S GONE, SO YOU CAN GET OUT..!

WHY, JOSH WAS JUST EIGHTEEN THEN...A BOY!

HE WAS MAN ENOUGH TO STICK UP A BANK AT TUCSON. MAN ENOUGH TO GUN DOWN THE TELLER!

SOME OLDER MEN MUST HAVE LED HIM ASTRAY, TOM. YOU KNOW JOSH. HE'S GOOD AND GENTLE...

I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF IT! IT'S A LIE..!

IT HURTS TO HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS, TOM. THERE WERE WITNESSES. THE TELLER WAS UNARMED, BUT JOSH WAS NERVOUS ...JOSH DID IT ALL RIGHT, OR HE WOULDN'T HAVE RUN!

THEN THE SHERIFF LEFT. HE FELT BADLY FOR MAE AND FRANKIE HYATT, BUT HE AND HIS POSSE TOOK UP THE HUNT AGAIN...

WHY DID PA GET US INTO THIS? HE HAD NO RIGHT MARRYING YOU, MA!

HE WAS A *BOY*, FRANKIE. HE MADE THAT ONE MISTAKE...

I'M A BOY, MA. SIX YEARS YOUNGER THAN PA WAS. BUT I KNOW BETTER THAN TO GUN A MAN DOWN...OR TO EVEN WANT TO KILL!

FRANKIE, TRY TO UNDERSTAND...

DON'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR HIM, MA! I'VE GOT HIS BAD BLOOD IN ME. I WAS BORN BAD LIKE PA. HE HAD HAD NO RIGHT TO DO THAT!

DURING THE SIX YEARS THAT PASSED THERE WAS BITTERNESS IN FRANKIE HYATT'S HEART THAT GREW DEEPER WITH TIME. AND WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED SHORTLY AFTER HIS EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY, FRANKIE QUIT THE LITTLE RANCH...

AND DURING THAT TIME HE SECRETLY PRACTICED TILL HE BECAME DEADLY WITH A SIXGUN. FOR FRANKIE KNEW HE WAS BORN BAD AND HE WAS JUST PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THAT KIND OF LIFE...

IT WAS JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER, AT EL TORO ROJO SALOON, THIS SIDE OF THE MEXICAN BORDER, WHEN YOUNG FRANKIE HAD HIS FIRST CHANCE TO PROVE THAT PRACTICE PAYS OFF...

MAKE ROOM, GRINGO!

SINCE YOU'RE SO ANXIOUS FOR A DRINK, AMIGO, HAVE MINE!

YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO BE TIRED OF LIFE, GRINGO!

IF THOSE WERE BULLETS INSTEAD OF WORDS COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, I'D BE A GONER!

CRACK CRACK

CARRAMBA! HE BEAT *SANCHEZ* TO THE DRAW!

WHY YOU DID NOT KILL ME, GRINGO?

WHAT FOR, SENOR? I PROVED I *COULD* HAVE!

I WILL CALL YOU THE ARIZONA KID. BUT HOMBRE, YOU ARE NO KID. UNTIL NOW, NO MAN HAVE BEAT PABLO SANCHEZ TO THE DRAW!

CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT TWO PAGES

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OUTLAWS of the WEST

TEXAS RANGERS IN-ACTION

FRONTIER MARSHAL

WYATT EARP

BILLY THE KID

CHARLTON WESTERN GROUP

AT YOUR NEWSSTAND NOW!

LATER THE MAN WHO WAS KNOWN AND FEARED IN THE SOUTHWEST, THE MAN CALLED EL LOBO, CAME INTO EL TORO ROJO TO GATHER HIS MEN...

...I THINK WE CAN HAVE THIS GRINGO, BOSS. HE IS A DEVIL WITH A GUN!

YOU, AMERICANO, TURN AND LET ME LOOK AT YOU!

HAVE YOURSELF A GOOD LOOK, MISTER!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, HIJO?

DON'T CALL ME *HIJO*. I'M NOT A *BOY* ...SANCHEZ WILL VOUCH FOR THAT!

YOU LOOK WET BEHIND THE EARS, HIJO!

WHAT TH'..!

I NEED A JOB, MISTER. I GET IT FROM YOU OR I GET IT FROM SOME OTHER OUTFIT...

OKAY, AMIGO, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, YOU'VE GOT A JOB!

SO FRANKIE HYATT, ALIAS THE ARIZONA KID, RODE FOR THE BORDER WITH THE NOTORIOUS BANDIDO, EL LOBO...

YOU, KID, GET BACK AND RIDE WITH THE OTHERS!

I RIDE WHERE I WANT, SENOR!

YOU ARE LUCKY, GRINGO. NEVER HAVE I HEARD ANYONE SPEAK THIS WAY TO EL LOBO... AND LIVE!

THEY RIDE INTO A MEXICAN VILLAGE.

THEY RIDE INTO A WALLED-IN HACIENDA.

YOU...MR. ARIZONA KID...COME HERE!

I, EL LOBO--I ALONE GIVE ORDERS. AND I AM OBEYED WITHOUT QUESTION!

WHY YOU, BUCKET O'LARD...

HOLD IT, GRINGO. YOU'LL LOOK LIKE A SIEVE BEFORE YOU CAN RAISE THE GUN TO FIRE!

GET HIM OUT OF MY SIGHT!

DAYS PASSED, THEN WEEKS...

I'M SICK OF THIS. A MAN CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT EXCITEMENT, WITH ALL THIS QUIET!

PATIENCE, MY YOUNG AMIGO. WE DO NOT QUESTION HOW OR WHEN EL LOBO CHOOSES OUR JOBS!

I WANT ACTION, SANCHEZ. YOUR EL LOBO IS A WOLF WITHOUT FANGS, A BAG OF WIND!

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME, LONGER THAN EVER. PERHAPS I CAN TALK TO HIM, GRINGO...

...SO I SAY, JEFE THE MEN ARE BECOMING EDGY BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN SO LONG!

THE MEN, SANCHEZ, OR THE *BOY*? VERY WELL, WE GO UP TO YUMA FOR A RAID ON A BANK. I HAVE THE JOB PLANNED. WE RIDE OUT TONIGHT. BY THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW...

TWO DAYS LATER, YUMA, ARIZONA...

AS THE WILD BANDIDOS FROM THE SOUTH OF THE BORDER REIGNED IN BEFORE THE BANK, FRANKIE HYATT'S HEART THUNDERED IN HIS CHEST. THIS WAS TO BE HIS FIRST JOB...

YOU, HIJO, YOU WILL STAND WATCH OUT HERE. FIRE TWICE IF THE LAW COMES!

FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER BOY FOR THE KID JOBS, LOBO. I'M GOIN' IN WITH YOU!

BANK

BANK

FASTER, HOMBRES! THE LAW WILL NOT WAIT!

LOOK OUT, GET AWAY FROM THAT RIFLE!

NO FRANKIE!

YOU FOOL--!

VAMOS, HOMBRES--!

WHY'D YOU DO IT? WHY'D YOU BLOCK MY SHOT?

WAIT, YOU CALLED ME FRANKIE. NOBODY HERE KNOWS ME BY THAT NAME!

TAKE THE GLOVE OFF MY RIGHT HAND, FRANKIE...

FRANKIE LOOKED AT THE HAND, AT THE TATOO ON IT, AND MEMORIES FLOODED BACK...

PA? B-BUT WHY, PA..?

YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE I DID, FRANKIE. THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD STOP YOU!

I THOUGHT I HATED YOU FOR GIVING ME YOUR BLOOD SO THAT I WAS BORN BAD, PA...BUT I DON'T..!

NOBODY'S BORN BAD...SON ...I...WENT BACK TO THE ONLY LIFE I COULD...WITH THE LAW ALWAYS AFTER ME..

SHOTS RANG SHARPLY OUTSIDE AS THE BANDIDOS BATTLED APPROACHING LAWMEN...

YOU TOOK MY BULLET TO KEEP ME FROM THAT KIND OF LIFE, PA, AND...

HE'S GONE, GRINGO. GET OUT, RIDE FAST AND FAR. THAT'S WHAT HE WANTED FOR YOU!

HIS FATHER'S WORDS ECHOED ABOVE THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE AS FRANKIE SWUNG INTO HIS SADDLE...

NOBODY'S BORN BAD...

FRANKIE HYATT HEADED BACK TOWARDS THE OLD HOMESTEAD. HE WEPT, FOR FRANKIE WAS NOT QUITE A MAN YET...

END

ROY RALLEY'S RAIDERS

Roy Ralley raised his hand slowly and his deadly band of killers came to a halt outside of Peter's General Merchandise store. Once the town of Blakersville, on the edge of the desert, had been a thriving place. Now it was a ghost town with only the old store surviving because from time to time travelers bound for Mexico via the desert route had to stop there for supplies and for precious water.

"Sam and Bill, you two follow me into the store. Let's check to see who may be in there now. We can't take any chances. Good-bye to the States."

In the period after the War Between the States, Roy Ralley had changed his band of guerrillas into a band of raiders and killers. They had spread terror and destruction throughout the Southwest. At one time it might be a raid on a small town. Another time they would hold up a bank. And now they had finished one of their most successful "Jobs." They had looted the Handersville Gold Stage. But Roy Ralley had also seen the handwriting on the wall. Federal troops, state militia, U.S. Marshal teams - were all on his trail.

"Once into Mexico," he told his men, "we share the gold and split up. There's enough for all of us to do something else."

"What can I do for you gentlemen?" asked Peter Temlock, ignoring the weapons in the hands of the three men who had just entered his store.

"Remain where you are and you won't be hurt," advised Roy Ralley. "We want to see the back of your store."

A quick check showed that nobody was hiding in either the back living rooms of the store nor in the large partly filled storeroom.

"Here's a list of things we need," said Roy Ralley. "and don't worry, old man, we'll pay you."

Leaning against a sack of potatoes with his hat over his eyes was a thin youth. Roy Ralley kicked him in the legs.

"Help us load the supplies and you get a silver dollar for your work."

The youth, in a lazy manner, got up from the floor, yawned a few times and then began to move out the supplies. The raiders had brought with them several pack horses and two mules. It took about an hour to load the animals. Then came the problem of water and Peter Temlock explained matters to them.

"The miners who once lived here and had to go out into the desert worked out a good idea for carrying water. Remember, you must carry enough water for yourselves and your animals. If you are going to return here, you need a lot of water. If you go to Mexico, you'll get water as soon as you cross over the boundary.

Fill your canteens now. I have extra size large canteens. Carry one extra one for each man and animal. This will last you for about two days if you ration it carefully. The mules will carry the water caskets. You use the bottom one first. Then cut it off and drop it. Then go to the second, and then the third. My boy will load the mules for you."

When that had been accomplished, Roy Ralley paid his bill to the old man and tipped the boy as he had promised. Quickly they all headed for the desert. It was only after two hours of riding that one of the men spoke to his leader.

"You didn't have to pay the bill. You could have killed both of them."

"We got plenty of money," grinned Roy Ralley. "Anyway they did help us and I figure they didn't even suspect who we were."

Two days later a group of U.S. soldiers and four U.S. Deputy Marshals came to the store. Lieutenant Donald Baker spoke to the youth.

"How did your plan work out?"

"Fine," was the smiling reply. "We will follow them slowly. After they drink from the bottom casket they will start on the next casket which is full of salt water. With the hot blazing sun above them they won't be able to do much. They will dismount and loosen their horses. We'll pick up the horses first - and we get those men when the fight has gone out of them, without firing a shot or losing one of our men."

At each time Lieutenant Donald Baker would tell the story of the capture of Roy Ralley and his raiders, he was always sure to comment: "I don't know which way Billy The Kid is faster With his brains or his gun."

●●●●●●●●●

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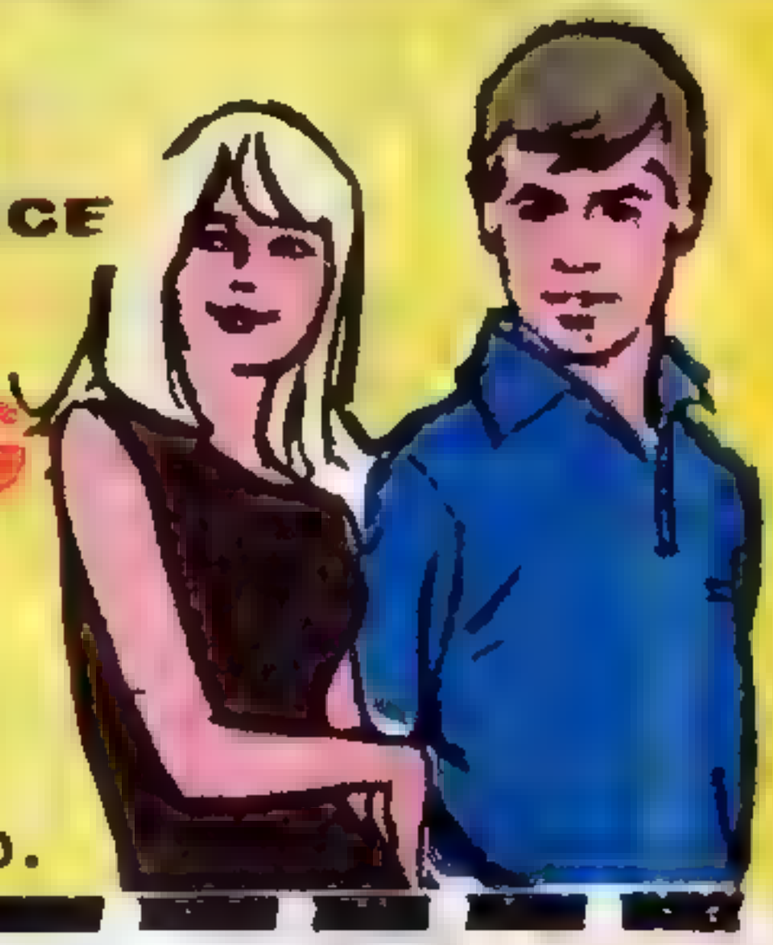

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THE BIG HOT

A GOLD DELIVERY WAS BEING CARRIED TO THE CHARLES FLINT BANK IN FLINTSVILLE WYOMING...

BUCK FALLON

WORK FAST. THE TWO O'CLOCK STAGE WILL BE ALONG IN FIFTEEN MINUTES!

GET A MOVE ON. BLOW THE LOCKS OFF!

CRAASH!

B-542

CRACK!

ZING

ZANG

CRACK

CRACK

EIGHT MINUTES TO GET THAT GOLD INTO THOSE SADDLEBAGS AND GET AWAY FROM HERE!

I KNOW YOUR VOICE, CHARLIE FLINT!

BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ANYBODY, DANNERS!

CRACK!

SEPARATE IN THE HILLS. MCCALL STAY WITH ME. BRING THE GOLD TO THE BACK OF MY BANK TONIGHT ...AND DON'T TRY HOLDIN' OUT BECAUSE I KNOW JUST HOW MUCH THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE!

I DON'T GET IT, CHARLIE. YOU STOLE YOUR OWN MONEY!

CORRECTION, JESS. IT'S NOT MY MONEY UNTIL IT'S DELIVERED. THAT'S MULFORD AND CRIPPS GUARANTEE!

YOU'RE A CLEVER MAN, CHARLIE FLINT. BUT WHY DO YOU TAKE A CHANCE LIKE THIS? YOU'RE A RICH MAN!

JESS, I'M BUILDIN' A MONUMENT TO MYSELF. I'M KEEPIN' THE LION'S SHARE OF THE LOOT, BUT I'M NOT GREEDY. I'LL PUT EVERY BIT OF THAT GOLD INTO MAKIN' FLINTSVILLE BIGGER...

I'LL LIVE TO SEE MY TOWN GROW INTO THE BIGGEST CITY IN THE WEST!

THAT NIGHT...

I'M GIVING YOU A MODEST SHARE OF THE GOLD. BUT YOUR BIG PRIZE IS GOIN' TO BE THE SPECIA JOBS I'M CREATIN' FOR YOU. JOBS WHERE YOU CAN LAY YOUR HANDS ON TAX MONEY..!

YOU'LL HAVE A VISITOR IN A DAY OR TWO, WHEN WORD GETS BACK, CHARLIE. THEY WON'T TAKE A QUARTER-MILLION LOSS JUST LIKE THAT!

BEN MULFORD WILL TEAR HIS HAIR AND THREATEN AND HOWL, BUT I'LL STILL MAKE HIM LIVE UP TO HIS GUARANTEE, JESS..!

BEN MULFORD, OF MULFORD AND CRIPPS, ARRIVED TWO DAYS LATER ON THE MORNING STAGE AND STORMED INTO CHARLIE FLINT'S OFFICE AT THE BANK...

LAST TIME IT WAS $32,000, FLINT. AND YOU SAID YOU'D GET THE BANDITS. AND THIS TIME IT'S $250,000! YOU'LL PROMISE ME AGAIN YOU'LL GET THE BANDITS; BUT YOU WON'T, AND I CAN GUESS WHY..!

YOU'D BETTER EXPLAIN THAT REMARK, MULFORD. AND HAVE A CARE ABOUT SLANDER, BECAUSE I HAVE A WITNESS..!

OUR COMPANY HAS DETECTIVES, FLINT. YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS. WE'RE THROUGH CARRYING GOLD FOR YOU!

I MAY START MY OWN DELIVERY SERVICE, MULFORD!

THE PEOPLE OF FLINTSVILLE THOUGHT OF CHARLIE FLINT AS A REASONABLY GENEROUS MAN. MOST OF THE PEOPLE OWED HIM MONEY...AT AN UNREASONABLE RATE OF INTEREST...

WILLIS, I'M ALREADY A PARTNER IN YOUR CASINO FOR THE MONEY YOU OWE ME!

I'M OFFERING TO SELL THE OTHER HALF, MR. FLINT!

I'LL PAY YOU $2,500 FOR IT, WILLIS!

THAT PLACE COST ME $40,000 TO BUILD!

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT, WILLIS. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO RUN A CASINO. I'LL LET YOU HAVE THE GAMBLING CONCESSION ON A FIFTY-FIFTY SPLIT OF THE PROFITS.

YOU'VE GOT ME OVER A BARREL, MR. FLINT... I'VE GOT TO TAKE YOUR OFFER!

BART WILLIS WAS LUCKY TO LEAVE WITH HIS SHIRT...

I'M INTERESTED TO KNOW HOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET HIS FIFTY PERCENT OF THE GAMBLING CONCESSION, CHARLIE!

MY MEN RUN THE ROULETTE, THE CARD GAMES. THEY'LL LOSE...TO OTHER MEN WORKIN' FOR ME. I GET ALL MY MONEY BACK AND WILLIS' BESIDES. AND I'LL BUY HIM OUT FOR $5(0... IF I FEEL GENEROUS!

ROYAL CASINO

THERE WERE SOME THINGS ON THE PLUS SIDE FOR CHARLIE FLINT..

I GOT THIS DREAM FOR MY CITY, JESS. NOT JUST ANOTHER BIG WESTERN TOWN. THIS WILL BE LIKE A EUROPEAN CITY... ...PARIS, ROME, LONDON. IT'LL HAVE CULTURE, JESS!

A MUSEUM, I SUPPOSE ...AN OPERA HOUSE?

SOON...

THERE SHE IS, JESS. I GOT THE IDEA FROM A SKETCH I SAW IN A MAGAZINE ONCE!

A GREEK TEMPLE, CHARLIE...THE PARTHENON! IT'S ELEGANT!

CHARLIE FLINT FAILED TO CATCH THE IRONY IN HIS FRIENDS WORDS...

ELEGANT, THAT'S IT! JESS, YOU'RE A MAN OF CULTURE, THE ONLY EDUCATED MAN I KNOW. I'M GOIN' TO MAKE YOU GOVERNOR OF WYOMIN' ONE OF THESE DAYS..!

CHARLIE, I'D RATHER HAVE THE NEWSPAPER YOU PROMISED TO BUILD FOR ME SOMEDAY!

I'LL HAVE BIGWIGS FROM THE EAST STOP AT MY PARTHEÑON...

PARTHENON, CHARLIE. YES, AND THOSE BOSTON AND NEW YORK FOLK WILL SEE THAT CHARLIE FLINT HAS BROUGHT THE GLORIES OF ANCIENT GREECE TO *FLINTSVILLE* OF 1847!

OF COURSE, CHARLIE FLINT WAS THE POWER BEHIND MAYOR ED CLINTON'S THRONE AT CITY HALL...

...CHARLIE, I DON'T THINK THE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO STAND STILL FOR MORE TAXES, ESPECIALLY FOR SOMETHIN' USELESS LIKE AN OPERA HOUSE!

ED CLINTON, WHEN I WANT AN OPINION FROM YOU, I'LL HAVE MY HEAD EXAMINED!

WHAT I MEAN IS, CHARLIE, WE CAN DO THE SAME THING BY LICENSING BUSINESSMEN. TWO DOLLARS FOR A BLACKSMITH, TEN FOR RENTIN' A HOTEL...

I NEVER THOUGHT OF LICENSIN'! WE'LL DO THAT IN ADDITION TO RAISIN' TAXES..!

CHARLIE FLINT HAD A FINGER IN EVERY BUSINESS IN TOWN AND A HAND IN EVERY UNTIL...

WHY SHOULD I PAY THE TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS FOR LICENSE FEE, CHARLIE? WE'RE PARTNERS. YOU SHOULD PAY AT LEAST HALF!

FRED, I PUT EVERY PENNY I GET INTO BUILDING FLINTSVILLE INTO A BIGGER AND BIGGER CITY, *YOU* AND EVERY OTHER BUSINESSMAN IN TOWN PROFIT BY THAT!

I CAN'T DENY THAT, CHARLIE. YOU'RE THE HEART, SOUL, AND POCKETBOOK OF FLINTSVILLE. YES, SIR, I'LL BE PROUD TO PAY THAT LICENSE FEE!

YOU WON'T REGRET IT, FRED!

IT WAS TRUE...CHARLIE FLINT DID PUT ALL HIS MONEY ... AND EVERYONE ELSE'S HE COULD LAY HIS HANDS ON...INTO REALIZING HIS AMBITIOUS DREAM. BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED THAT FOLLOWING YEAR, 1848...

'...AT A PLACE NEAR COLOMA CALLED SUTTER'S MILLI

I'M GOING RIGHT HOME TO PACK. I'LL BE ON MY WAY IN TWO HOURS!

FLINTSVILLE STAR TI

EXTRA

EXTRA

CHARLIE FLINT COULDN'T SEE THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL...

FOLKS AREN'T FOOLS, ED. THEY WON'T LEAVE THEIR HOMES AND BUSINESSES...

GOLD. IT WOULD BE GREAT TO BE RICH AND NOT HAVE TO KOWTOW TO MEN LIKE CHARLIE FLINT. I GOT NOTHIN' TO LOSE!

MAYOR CLINTON

GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA

*** EXTRA GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALI

GOLD

THE WOULD-BE EMPIRE BUILDER WAS HELPLESS TO STOP THE PEOPLE FROM ABANDONING HIS DREAM CITY FOR THE DREAM OF GOLD...

FOOLS! FOOLS! YOU'RE CHASING AFTER A WILL-O'-THE-WISP! YOU'RE DESTROYING YOUR OWN LIVES...

GOODBYE, CHARLIE...

JESS...NOT YOU, TOO! IF YOU DESERT ME, WHAT HAVE I GOT LEFT?

THERE'S STILL FLINTSVILLE, THE MONUMENT TO CHARLIE FLINT AND CORRUPTION. AGAIN, CHARLIE, GOODBYE!

A YEAR LATER A BROKEN LONELY MAN STOOD IN THE DECAYING EMPTINESS OF HIS LOST DREAM. FLINTSVILLE THE BIGGEST GHOST TOWN IN THE WEST!

FLINTSVILLE

END

SHERIFF MATT YAWKEY OF CROOKED HORN, TEXAS WAS NOT ONE TO SCOFF AT A GREAT NEW INVENTION. AND HE FOUND A VERY GOOD USE FOR SCOTTY MCCREPE'S...

WONDERFUL PORTABLE GALLOWS

DON'T SHOOT...I'M STOPPIN'!

I'M NOT ARGUIN; BOYS. YOU CAN TAKE EVERYTHING BUT MY LIFE!

LET IT BE KNOWN HERE AND NOW THAT MATT YAWKEY, WITH THE BRIGHT RED HAIR, WAS LEADER OF THE OUTFIT OF HIGHWAYMEN...

SIR, I HAVE NAUGHT BUT ME LIFE SAVINGS, A PALTRY TWENTY DOLLARS!

AS YOUR SHOTGUN RIDER SAID, MISTER, YOU'VE ALSO GOT YOUR LIFE. PUT YOUR TWENTY IN MY HAT AND KEEP YOUR LIFE!

B-543

AND THE NATTILY-DRESSED, IF SOMEWHAT THREADBARE, MAN WAS SCOTTY MCCREPE, INVENTOR...

WHAT'S IN THE BUNDLE?

A NEW INVENTION OF MINE, COMPOSED MAINLY OF TWO-BY- FOURS...

1

MATT YAWKEY JUST SHRUGGED. THEN HE AND HIS MEN RODE OFF...

I HOPE THAT YOU, SIR, WILL BE THE FIRST TO USE MY INVENTION..!

SCOTTY MCCREPE TOOK ONLY ENOUGH TIME AFTER ARRIVING AT THE TOWN OF BROKEN HORN, TO RETRIEVE HIS INVENTION FROM THE TOP OF THE STAGECOACH BEFORE REPORTING TO THE SHERIFF...

SHERIFF

COME ON, YAWKEY, YOU GOT MORE FROM THOSE FOLKS ON THE STAGE THAN YOU'RE ADMITTIN' TO. WE WANT A FAIR CUT!

OR WE MIGHT JUST HAVE A TALK WITH MARSHAL HOGGE!

WELL, NOW, I'VE HEARD A MOST INTERESTIN' BIT OF TALK! YOU'RE ALL A FLOCK OF THIEVES!

YOU TWO LOUDMOUTHS, NOW SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

I'M A REASONABLE MAN, SHERIFF. IF YOU'LL RETURN MY TWENTY DOLLARS AND BUY MY INVENTION FOR THE TOWN, I'LL FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD!

WELL, I REALLY OUGHT TO SEE WHAT I'M BUYIN'...

SCOTTY MCCREPE QUICKLY ASSEMBLES HIS STRANGE AND TERRIBLE INVENTION...

A SURE CURE FOR CRIMES, GENTS. THIS PORTABLE GALLOWS DOESN'T FINISH A MAN OFF ALL AT ONCE. NOTICE THE COUNTERWEIGHT THAT SLOWLY MOVES DOWN AS THE CONDEMNED MAN LOSES WEIGHT EACH DAY...

AHA, I SEE. IT SLOWLY PULLS THE ROPE DOWN, TIGHTENING SLOWLY AS HE STANDS ON TIPTOES UNTIL AT LAST...

2

CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT PAGE

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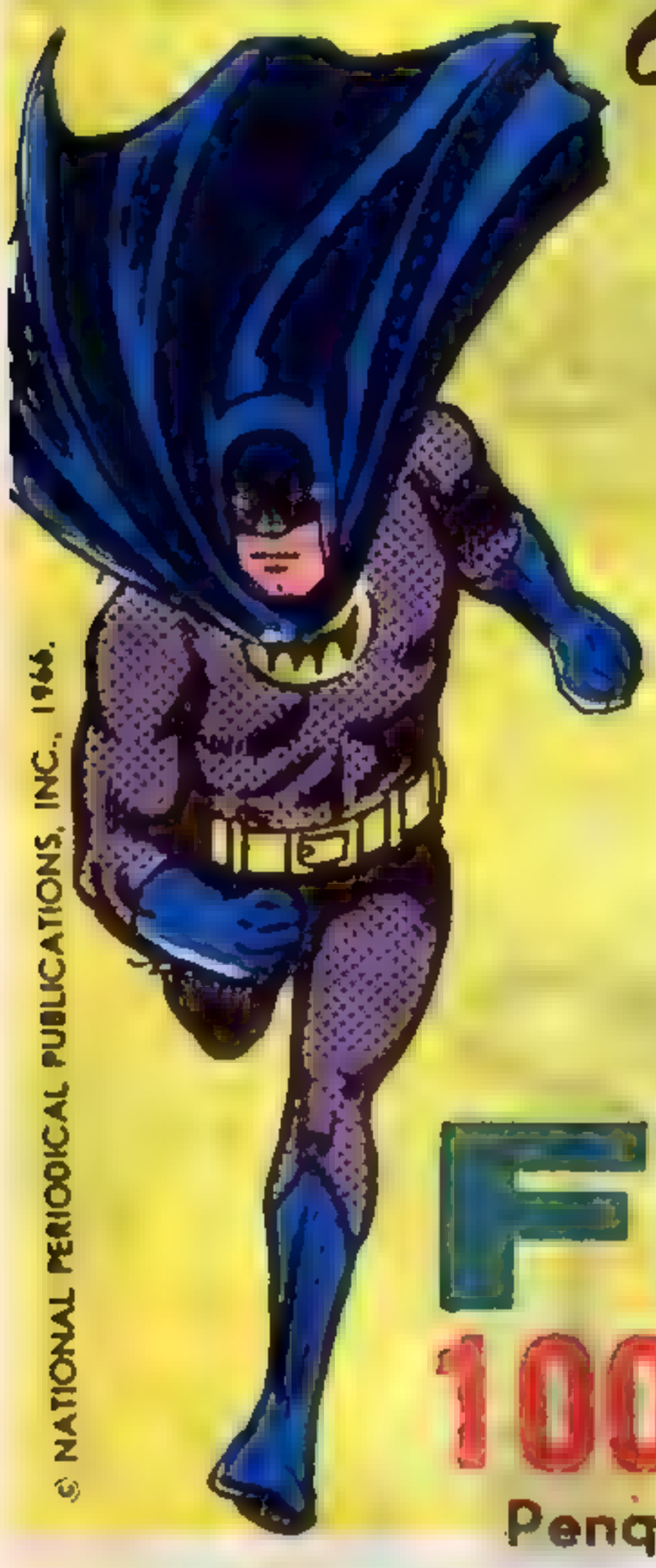

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YOU'RE MORE OF A HIGHWAY ROBBER THAN I AM, MCCREPE!

HMMM...I WONDER IF THE MARSHAL KNOWS YOU AND YOUR MEN TOOK OVER THIS TOWN TO KEEP FROM BEING ARRESTED AS OUTLAWS!

THE MARSHAL WON'T FIND OUT FROM YOU, MISTER!

BAM! BLAM!

YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

ME AND MY DEPUTY SAW YOU GUN DOWN THE STAGE DRIVER AND HIS SHOTGUN RIDER. WE GIVE SWIFT JUSTICE IN THIS TOWN!

THAT'S ENOUGH, YAWKEY...*REACH!* YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR THE MURDER OF THE STAGE DRIVER AND HIS SHOTGUN RIDER. YOU WERE TOO QUICK FOR ME TO STOP...BUT THOSE CROOKS HAD IT COMIN'!

DON'T LOOK FOR YOUR BOYS. THEY ARE LOCKED UP IN JAIL!

SO...

MY CARD, GENTS. I'M FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. IF YOU HAD ANY SENSE, YOU'D HAVE SEEN THAT MY INVENTION COULD NEVER HAVE WORKED!

IF YAWKEY HAD ANY SENSE, HE WOULDN'T BE BEHIND BARS WAITIN' TO GO ON TRIAL FOR HIS LIFE!

END

I CAME TO KANSAS, A RIGHT PEACEABLE GENT, IN QUEST OF MY FORTUNE. BUT DAME FORTUNE HAD OTHER PLANS FOR ME, AND IT'S ALL WRITTEN DOWN IN MY LETTER TO NELLIE ADAMS...

THE INCIDENT AT FIRE CREEK

I CAME WEST FROM PITTSBURGH IN '71 WITH MY CONASTOGA WAGON, A LOAD OF ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING FOLKS MIGHT BUY. I HAD MY EYE ON 'BUILDIN' A GENERAL STORE SOMEWHERE THAT LOOKED GOOD TO SETTLE. BUT THE LAST THING I WAS LOOKING FOR WAS TROUBLE...

I SAW THEM COMIN' AND I SORT OF SMELLED OUTLAW, SO I FUSSED WITH MY POTS AND PANS, BUT I WAS REALLY STASHIN' AWAY MY WAD...

YOUR MONEY, MISTER...THAT'S ALL WE WANT. YOU CAN HAVE YOUR LIFE IF YOU TREAT US RIGHT!

8-511

NOW WHAT I WAS DOIN' EXACTLY WAS SCRAMBLIN' TO GET THE MONEY I HID IN THE WAGON, AND I JOSTLED MY DOUBLEBARREL SHOTGUN AND SOMEHOW IT WENT OFF...

YAA! YOU CLUMSY IDIOT!

BLAM

BLAM

I DIDN'T STOP TO FIGURE I HAD THE UPPER HAND. I JUST DIVED UNDER THAT WAGON...

YOU WANT ME TO BLEED TO DEATH, FOOL? COME OUT FROM 'UNDER THERE AND GET SOMETHIN' FROM THAT CONASTOGA TO DIG THE PELLETS OUT O' ME!

Y-YES, SIR!

SOON I'D BURIED THE TWO, AND...

I OUGHT TO FINISH YOU OFF, BUT MY GUN'S IN THE CREEK AND I HURT TOO MUCH TO BOTHER. WHAT'S YOUR NAME MISTER?

THOMAS WIMBLEY, OUT OF PITTSBURGH. AND I DIDN'T MEAN TO SET OFF THAT GUNSHOT...

NOBODY BACK IN FIRE CREEKS GOIN' TO BELIEVE ME IF I TELL 'EM YOU KNOCKED OFF CHET AND BLACKIE AND CAME NEAR DOIN' ME IN...ALL BY ACCIDENT. LEAST OF ALL, MONTY HARPER WON'T BELIEVE IT!

I'M NOT GOIN' TO FIRE CREEK. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE IT IS!

THIS IS FIRE CREEK RIGHT HERE. IT CIRCLES 'ROUND THE HILL CLOSE BY TOWN, SO WE CALL THE TOWN THAT TOO!

WELL, I'LL DRIVE AROUND THE OTHER WAY...

MONTY HARPER IS MY BOSS. IF I TELL HIM WE GOT BUSHWACKED BY SOME GANG, HE'LL GET THE BOYS TOGETHER AND GO AFTER THEM. HE'D FIND OUT I WAS LYIN'.

JUST TELL HIM THE TRUTH!

I ALREADY TOLD YOU THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT. YOU'RE COMIN' BACK AND TELL EVERYBODY ANOTHER STORY, OR I'LL HUNT YOU DOWN...

OKAY, MISTER ...OKAY...

THIS IS WHAT I FIGURED. YOU'RE A GUNSLINGER OUT OF WYOMIN'. YOU BLASTED ME FIRST WITH THAT SHOTGUN. THEN YOU NAILED CHET AND BLACKIE WITH YOUR SIXGUN. IT DON'T SOUND SO BAD THAT WAY SEE!

IT SOUNDS LIKE A WHOPPER TO ME...BUT THAT MAY BE BECAUSE I KNOW IT IS.

THERE'S SOME HOLES IN YOUR STORY, MR. BARROWS. ONE, I NEVER HAD A SIXGUN IN MY LIFE. TWO, WHY WOULD I COME TO FIRE CREEK RIGHT AFTER GUNNIN' YOUR FRIENDS?

I'LL GET YOU A SIXGUN, WIMBLEY. AS FOR YOUR COMIN' HERE, YOU AIN'T SCARED OF NOTHIN'!

I STILL THINK YOU'D BE BETTER OFF TELLIN' THE TRUTH!

YOU DO IT MY WAY, WIMBLEY... *WIMBLEY?* WE GOT TO CHANGE THAT NAME. CONASTOGA...THE CONASTOGA KID SOUNDS GOOD!

SO I BECAME THE CONASTOGA KID AND THAT WAS THE NAME I PUT IN THE BOOK DOWNSTAIRS, AT THE FIRE CREEK HOTEL...

YOU SURE TOOK YOUR TIME GETTIN' HERE, MR. BARROWS. I'M HUNGRY!

THAT'S TOO BAD. I TOLD THE BOSS THE STORY. NOW HE WANTS TO SEE YOU!

I'M NOT GOING TO SEE ANYBODY TILL AFTER I EAT, BARROWS!

MAYBE YOU GOT SOMETHING. A GUNSLINGER WOULD COME WHEN HE'S GOOD AND READY... STUPID, YOU'RE BUCKLIN' THAT BELT UPSIDE DOWN!

TRUTH WAS, I WASN'T IN ANY HURRY TO VISIT MONTY HARPER, BECAUSE I NEVER WAS A VERY GOOD LIAR. SO I ORDERED A BIG MEAL AND TOOK MY TIME EATIN' IT...

I HEARD LOU BARROWS' VOICE AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW HE WAS INTRODUCING ME TO MONTY HARPER. BUT I DIDN'T LOOK UP FOR FEAR OF BLURTING OUT THE TRUTH OR HAVING HIM SEE IT IN MY EYES SOMEHOW...

SO YOU GUNNED DOWN MY TWO BEST MEN, KID! OF COURSE, THEY DIDN'T DRAW FIRST?

THEY SURE DID, MISTER!

I TOLD THE TRUTH AND IT MUST HAVE SOUNDED LIKE THE TRUTH...

I CAN USE A FAST GUN, KID. I'LL PAY YOU TWENTY A WEEK AND A SHARE OF THE...ER... PROFITS!

JUDGIN' FROM THE WAY YOUR BOYS TRIED TO ROB ME, I WOULDN'T LIKE WORKIN' FOR YOU HARPER. I'M STAYIN' ON THE SIDE OF THE LAW FROM NOW ON!

THAT PART OF THE STORY YOU DIDN'T TELL ME, LOU. YOU KNOW THE RULES ABOUT WORKING ON YOUR OWN!

IT WAS BLACKIE AND CHET, BOSS! THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME!

BARROWS LIES AS EASY AS HE BREATHES, KID! NOW LISTEN. YOU MAY HAVE A GOOD IDEA BEING ON THE SIDE OF THE LAW. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE SHERIFF OF FIRE CREEK?

MR. HARPER, I'VE GOT MY CONASTOGA. I'VE GOT AMBITIONS...AND THERE'S NOT ENOUGH PAY BEING SHERIFF TO REALIZE THOSES AMBITIONS!

YOU'LL MAKE PLENTY AS SHERIFF! I'LL SEE TO THAT, KID!

I DON'T THINK I'D WANT TO TAKE YOUR MONEY, HARPER..!

YOU MAY HAVE THE FASTEST GUN IN KANSAS, KID, BUT I'VE GOT A DOZEN MEN, AND YOU CAN'T GUN THEM ALL DOWN BEFORE ONE OF THEM GETS YOU! THINK IT OVER...

I DID THINK IT OVER, AND I MUST HAVE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION, BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE TO TRY TO GUN DOWN EVEN ONE OF HARPER'S MEN...

MISS HAYES, I'VE BEEN NOTICIN' YOU FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS AND HOPIN' I'D HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK TO YOU..!

WE HAVE NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, MR. CONASTOGA KID..!

THAT NAME DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING, MISS ALICE. I *AM* WEARING A STAR!

THAT MEANS EVEN LESS. YOU'RE MONTY HARPER'S HANDPICKED MAN! THAT MAKES YOU A CROOK AS WELL AS A GUNSLINGER!

NONE OF IT'S TRUE, MISS ALICE. IF YOU'D LET ME CALL ON YOU, I'LL TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY!

I'LL PROBABLY FIND YOU'RE A LIAR AS WELL AS A CROOK AND A GUNSLINGER...BUT I WANT TO BE FAIR. I'LL EXPECT YOU AT SIX...FOR DINNER!

ALICE HAYES' INVITATION TO DINNER THAT EVENING... CONTRADICTED HER ACCUSATION. I DID THE SAME AT DINNER THAT EVENING...

THAT'S THE GOSPEL TRUTH. I NEVER USED THAT SHOTGUN FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT HUNTIN' GAME FOR FOOD. BUT IT WENT OFF ACCIDENTALLY.

ALL RIGHT, I MAY BELIEVE THAT, BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU'RE BEING MADE SHERIFF BY THAT DANCEHALL OWNER, THAT STAGE-COACH ROBBER AND CATTLE THIEF?

I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING FOR HIM YET AND I DON'T PLAN TO, MR. HAYES. I TOOK THE JOB TO KEEP FROM BEING AMBUSHED BY HARPER'S MEN!

CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT PAGE

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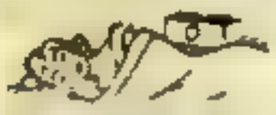

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I MUST HAVE AN HONEST FACE. BECAUSE THE WHOLE HAYES FAMILY TOOK MY WORK FOR ALL. I SAID AND INVITED ME BACK FOR DINNER THE NEXT WEEK...

REMIND YOUR FOLKS NOT TO SPREAD THAT STORY...OR MR. HARPER WILL SEND LOU BARROWS AND ME ON A ONE WAY TICKET TO BOOT HILL!

NOT A WORD, MR. WIMBLEY. THAT'S A PRETTY NAME. YES, I DEFINITELY LIKE IT!

A FEW DAYS LATER...

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO KID, IS BACK UP MY STORY THAT MY BOYS AND I NEVER LEFT TOWN!

THAT'S EASY. ALL *YOU* HAVE TO DO IS STAY IN TOWN, AND I SURE WILL BACK YOU UP, MR. HARPER!

WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO PULL, KID? I PUT THAT BADGE ON YOU, I CAN TAKE IT AWAY!

THEN I'LL TELL THE PEOPLE OF FIRE CREEK THAT THEY OUGHT TO HAVE AN ELECTION FOR SHERIFF, AND I'LL RUN! NOW, HARPER, THERE'S THE DOOR...

I DARED TALK THAT WAY TO MONTY HARPER BECAUSE I WAS IN LOVE WITH ALICE HAYES, AND LOVE HAS ALWAYS HAD A NUMBING EFFECT ON ME. ANYHOW, THERE WAS AN ANSWER FROM MONTY IN A FEW DAYS...

YOU SAY YOU'RE THE TOP GUN IN KANSAS. I SAY I AM. I SAY WE SETTLE IT WITH A SHOOT-OUT!

I NEVER SAID I WAS THE TOP GUN. LOU BARROWS SAID IT AND MR. HARPER BELIEVED HIM. I'M NOT TOP, MIDDLE OR BOTTOM GUN, MR. BELLINGO!

IN THAT CASE, MR. CONASTOGA KID, I GIVE YOU TILL SUNDOWN TO CLEAR OUT OF FIRE CREEK!

JEFF BELLINGO'S WORDS MADE ME SICK INSIDE. I WENT OVER THAT AFTERNOON TO TALK IT OVER WITH ALICE...

ALICE, I CAN'T LEAVE TOWN. I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU AND I THINK YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME.

THIS IS MY FAULT. I FORCED YOU TO BUCK MR. HARPER. I DO LOVE YOU, TOM. WE CAN BE MARRIED AND LEAVE TOWN TOGETHER, TODAY!

I HATE RUNNIN' FROM A FIGHT, BUT HAVIN' A SHOOTOUT WITH A PROFESSIONAL GUNSLINGER ISN'T PART OF MY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, DARLING!

TOM...THERE'S A FIRE DOWN BY YOUR OFFICE!

THE ONLY HORSE I HAD WAS OLD ORVILLE, WHO PULLED MY CONASTOGA, SO ALICE AND I RAN ALL THE WAY...

THERE GOES PART OF MY DREAM UP IN SMOKE!

"OOOF"

THAT MAN RIDIN' AWAY WAS ONE OF HARPER'S BOYS. THAT HARPER SURE IS MEAN ABOUT PEOPLE WHO WON'T GIVE HIM HIS WAY!

YOU CAN'T LEAVE THIS TOWN IN HARPER'S HANDS, TOM. I WAS WRONG ABOUT US GOING AWAY FROM HERE!

YOU MEAN YOU *WANT* ME TO HAVE A SHOOT-OUT WITH THAT JEFF B-B-BELLINGO, ALICE?

I SURE DO, DARLING! BUT I WANT YOU TO WIN! I'VE HAD AN IDEA FOR A LONG TIME, TOM...

THE THING THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN A GUN DUEL, TOM, IS WHICH MAN CAN MAKE ON THE DRAW. SO IF THE DRAW CAN BE ELIMINATED...

THERE'D BE NO PROBLEM AT ALL, IF *JEFF BELLINGO* COULD BE ELIMINATED! ALICE, I'VE NEVER SHOT A SIXGUN...

IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME ARGUING WITH ALICE HAYES, SO I LET HER SHOW ME ABOUT SIXGUN SHOOTING. HER PA WORKED ON MY HOLSTER...

DON'T PULL THE TRIGGER, DEAR. *SQUEEZE IT!*

ALICE WORKED WITH ME WEARING A HOLSTER HER PA'D FIXED...

WHAT ALICE'S IDEA WAS, WAS TO FIX THE HOLSTER WITH A SWIVEL AND CUT OFF THE BOTTOM OF IT. I DIDN'T HAVE TO DRAW. I SHOT THROUGH THE HOLSTER...

BLAM

STANDING OVER BELLINGO'S BODY, TOM HOLDS HAT IN HAND.

FOLK GATHERED 'ROUND. ALICE STOOD BY MY SIDE AS HARPER PUSHED HIS WAY IN. HE LOOKED DAZED...

MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO BE NEXT, HARPER, AFTER SENDIN' ONE O' YOUR TRAMPS TO BURN MY CONASTOGA!

I...I'LL PAY FOR THAT, KID!

TOM OUGHT TO RUN YOU OUT-OF-TOWN, HARPER. YOU OWE HIM A LOT MORE FOR ALL THE TROUBLE YOU'VE CAUSED. YOU OUGHT TO BUILD HIM A GENERAL STORE, ALL SUPPLIED!

GENERAL STORE... OKAY...OKAY!

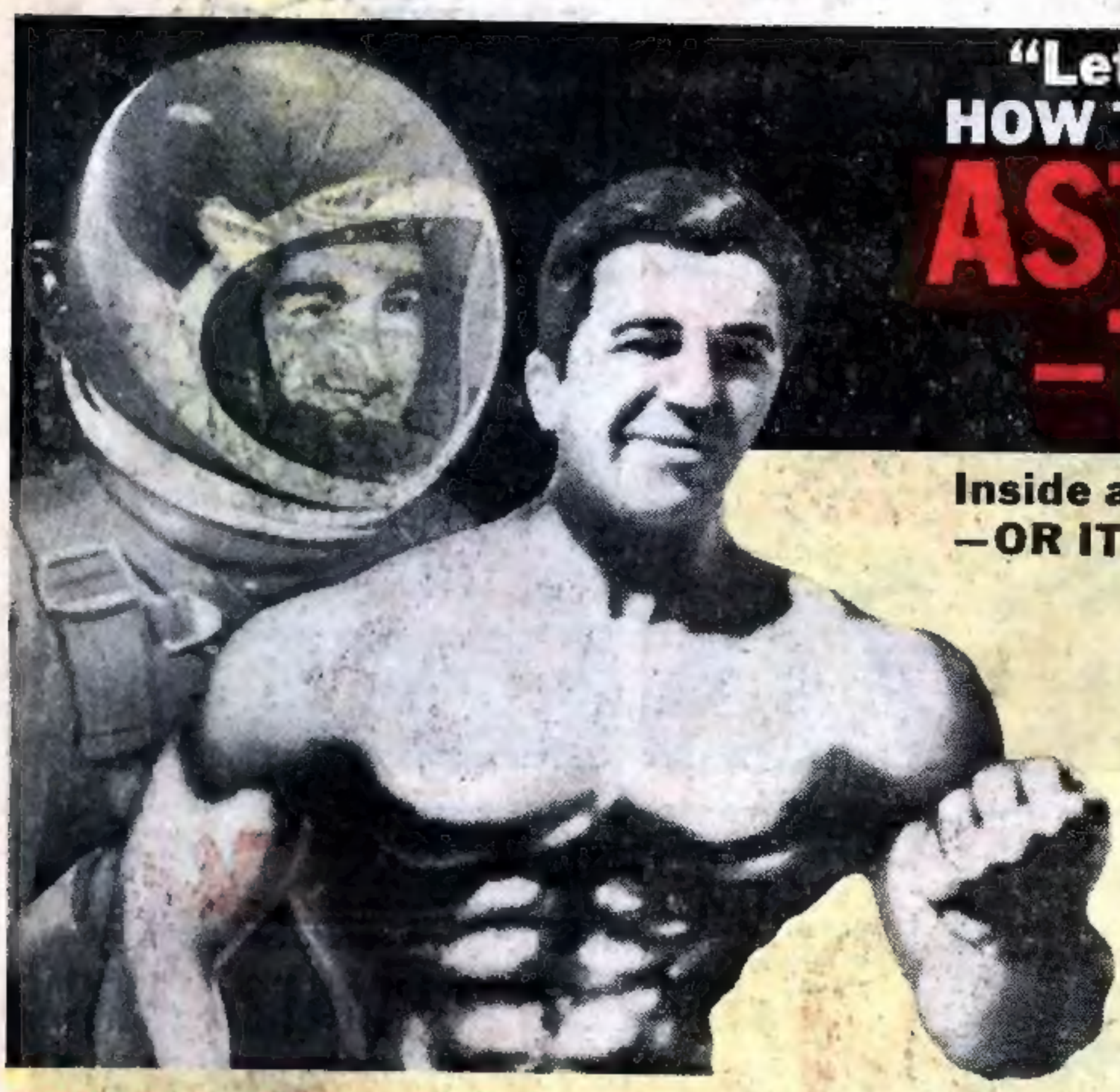
WE...MY WIFE ALICE...AND I WERE OPEN FOR BUSINESS TWO MONTHS LATER...

TOM, IF WE ADD A SECOND STORY TO THE STORE...

TOM WIMBLEY
the Conastoga Kid
GENERAL STORE

YES, ALICE IS A REMARKABLE WOMAN, NELLIE. ANYHOW SEEING AS HOW SHE AND I ARE MARRIED, I THOUGHT IT ONLY RIGHT TO WRITE AND BREAK OFF OUR ENGAGEMENT. GOODBYE, NELLIE.
LOVE, TOM WIMBLEY.

END



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says JOHN SILL

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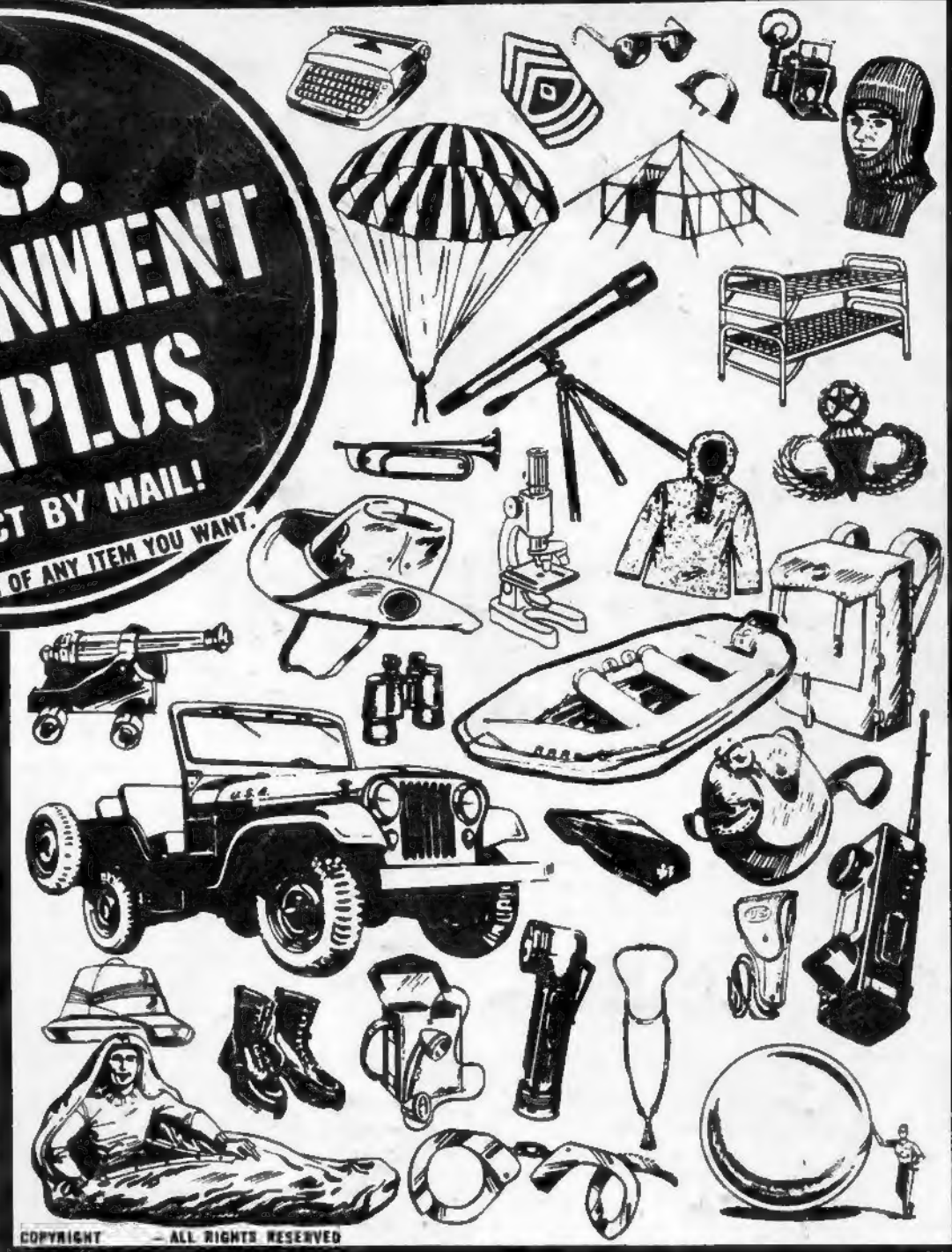

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